



# The Augur

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## Mark Pennies of Free Masonry

By Mel Wacks

Free masonry is a "science which is engaged in the search after Divine Truth and which employs symbolism as the method of instruction." It is interesting to briefly investigate the "connection" between the Freemasons and the Jews. According to Norman Cohn in *Warrant for Genocide*:

*"In the eighteenth century the Freemasons were on the whole hostile to the Jews. By the time of the French Revolution many lodges were still reluctant to accept Jewish members. At no time have Jews or persons of Jewish descent played a disproportionate part in Freemasonry."*

But this did not deter certain theories that a Judaeo-Masonic conspiracy was responsible for the French Revolution . . . and this accusation later developed into the notorious *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

It is true that the Freemasons were concerned with humanitarian reform (i.e., abolition of judicial torture and of witchcraft trials) — and this indeed benefited possible targets for such mistreatment — the Jews.

It was around 1850 that the myth of Judaeo-Masonic conspiracy reappeared — this time in Germany — as a weapon of the extreme right in its struggle against the growing forces of nationalism, liberalism, democracy and secularism. E.E. Eckert described how the Freemasons were organizing revolutionary movements, how they deliberately plunged the masses into moral barbarism and religious despair, and finally into economic desperation. No mention was made of Jewish involvement. However, another (anonymous) author did describe how the Freemasonry movement in Germany was governed by "unknown superiors" and consisted mostly of Jews.

This anonymous hatermonger went on to describe two pseudo-Masonic lodges in London consisting entirely of Jews and whose threshold no Gentile could cross! These mythical *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* which supposedly contained the writings were to lead directly to the plan of a secret Jewish government to dominate the world. This infamous forgery was to provoke massacres during the Russian Civil War and eventually helped provide the ideology which caused the near-extirmination of European Jews by the Nazi.



In the United States, Jews were always active in the Masonic Lodges — the Revolutionary patriot Haym Salomon was an active member — but, Masonry is by no means a Jewish organization.

The interesting "Mark Pennies" have been produced by the various Masonic chapters with a multitude of designs — many of them based on the ancient Jewish Shekel (and related Jewish themes such as the Seal of Solomon, the Persian King Darius, the Ark of the Covenant, etc.). The Mark Penny, when received by a member of the Fraternity is supposed to be inscribed with his own particular "mark" and as soon as selected, placed on record, never to be changed, but to remain his "mark" until the day of his death. The sam-



ples in the illustrations show the initials "L.C." within an arrowhead on a "Shekel" issued by the Shelby Chapter of Shelby, Ohio, and an ornamental "S" on a "Shekel" of the Bershire Royal Arch Chapter of Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

According to the Masons, Marks or pledges of this kind were of frequent use among the ancients under the name of "*tessara hospitalis*". (I.e., In the Medea of Euripides, Jason promises Medea on her parting from him to send her the symbols of hospitality which should procure her a kind reception in foreign countries).



The obverse of these Masonic Shekels is a copy of the ancient Jewish Shekel, issued during the First Revolt (66-70 C.E.). A chalice (or water laver?) is featured surrounded by the ancient Hebrew inscription (somewhat muddled on the Masonic pieces) which reads **SHEKEL OF ISRAEL**.

The Shelby Shekel has the lodge number (178) and the initials R.A.M., standing for Royal Arch Masonry. It is the symbolism of the Second Temple of Jerusalem that forms the basis of the Royal Arch Degree. The letters H.T.W.S.S.T.K.S. arranged in a circle within a keystone represent the "mark" of the Ancient Grand Master. This is based on Revelations 2:17, "*To him who overcometh will give a white stone and in it a new name written which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.*"

Both of the Shekels illustrated are made of silver, but similar pieces were also made in copper, aluminum, brass, bronze, nickel, white metal and nickel-silver.

We start a series of articles extracted from the long out of print "*Christian Teaching of Coin Mottoes*," originally published in London in 1911.

The Rev. Jeremiah Zimmerman was lecturer on numismatics at Syracuse University, New York.

The science of numismatics abundantly shows that man is a religious being, for the coins of Greece and Rome prove that their religion was as inseparable from their money as from their daily life, for all their best works in art and literature were consecrated to the gods whom they revered.

The presence of the images of the divinities of Greece on their national coinage is an important contemporary witness to the universal and deeply religious character of the ancient Greeks. They were intensely religious as they were intellectual, and their belief in the gods as the source of all blessings was so profound and practical that their gratitude was expressed in their frequent offerings and prayers.

Hence the presence of a religious inscription on a coin is no modern innovation, and without historical precedents, but from an early date, through centuries, the Greeks stamped the familiar representations of their deities upon their coinage. Nor was it strange that a religious people should have associated their religion with their money, for their purpose was to keep before the people the actual gods whom they held to be the founders, saviours, preservers, and patrons of their cities and the inspirers of their best works, as shown by the coins of Thasos.



Handsome portrait of  
Dionysus on gold  
hemidrachm of Thasos,  
early 4th Century B.C.  
Illustration enlarged.

It is generally believed that the earliest coins were struck within the sacred precincts of the temple, and this view is in harmony with the early representative character of money, and also the fact that in early and insecure times the temples were the safe and inviolate places for the rich treasures stored therein. When the transition came to convert the bars and wedges of electrum, gold and silver into coins it was natural that the mint should have been established



in the same place, under the direction of the priests and representatives of the state, and the supervision of the gods whose images the coins bore, as a guarantee for their genuine character. In fact, the very word money is derived from the temple of Juno Moneta, in Rome, for within its precincts the public mint was established, 268 B.C., when silver was first issued in that city, and it is likely that the Romans adopted this idea from the Greeks, especially as it is well-nigh certain that the ancient mint at Athens was established in the sacred shrine of the hero Stephanophorus.

Just as the history of the Greeks and Romans is inseparably connected with their religion, in like manner was their money identified with their religion, bearing the images and superscriptions of their gods and goddesses. The effigies or symbols of these were stamped upon the gold, silver and bronze coins, so that their vast pantheon is represented in a variety of religious types on the money that circulated for domestic and national use, containing the familiar images of Zeus, Saturn, Neptune, Mars, Mercury, Apollo, Hercules, Vulcan, Juno, Venus, Diana, Cybele, Athene, Arethusa, Astarte, Persephone, Apis, Anubis, etc.

The Roman emperors seem to have pooled all the gods of Rome, and even admitted foreign ones to their pantheon, and gave them a place upon their coinage, so as not to lose any possible advantage that might accrue from their influence among beings either terrestrial or celestial.

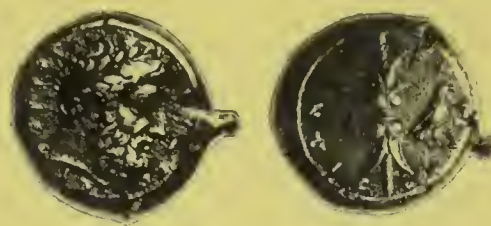
These images of their deities served as guardians of the genuine character of this all-important medium of exchange, and appeared as a guarantee that the money, was of the required weight and purity.

The coins were generally stamped with the image of the local guardian deity, or else with the recognized symbol of that deity, just as the coins of Athens bore the effigy of Pallas and the owl, the symbol of that goddess. Thus, on a coin of Claudius and Agrippina, we have preserved one of the very best extant copies of the famous and much venerated cultus image of the Ephesian Artemis, with the inscription "DIANA EPHESIA," that great goddess whom all Asia and the world was supposed to worship, and whose zealous followers opposed the work of the Apostle Paul almost to mob violence. As that identical cultus figure appears on a coin of Philip the Arab, we learn from this numismatic record that the worship of this same many-breasted Asiatic nature goddess prevailed at Ephesus at least two centuries later, whilst a denarius issued about the middle of the First Century B.C. by the consul L. Lentulus Crus shows that this cult had a local seat at that previous period, although the image of Jupiter Pluvius appears on the obverse.



Diana Ephesia on coin of Claudia and Agrippina  
(A.D. 51-54).

It was natural that Zeus, who occupied the supreme place among the gods of Greece, should appear very frequently, and in different attitudes, upon the coins of the Greeks. Many of them contain beautiful heads with majestic facial expression, and some with inscriptions, having the name of the deity and expressing some distinctive trait, as the Zeus of Freedom on a coin of Sicily, for his cult had been established there, and when Timoleon, the distinguished patriot, general and statesman, overcame the despotic rule of the tyrants about 339 B.C., he had coins struck in acknowledgment of his indebtedness, as though the gods had fought for the Syracusans, and on that attractive coin is a fine effigy of their great Zeus with the inscription ΖΕΥΣ ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΟΣ (the Zeus of Freedom, or the Liberator).



Zeus on obverse, and his thunderbolt on reverse of  
"Freedom coin" of Syracuse.

Fortunately for the numismatist who admires the artistic and superb beauty of the Greek coins, this ancient people excelled in their aesthetic taste as well as in some of their religious conceptions as to the appearance of their gods, for they made them as beautiful as possible by idealizing the human face divine, and hence they enriched the world of art for all time. And when I study closely some of these masterpieces of the medallic art, I cannot fail to contrast them with some of the multitudinous gods of Hinduism, for the followers of this religion seem to have had no eye for the beautiful, inasmuch as they made the images of their gods shockingly ugly; enough to frighten the children, and to give a nightmare to sensitive grown people. I refer to such horrible caricatures of the human face as portrayed in the famous idol Jagannath and that hideous fright, Mother Kali. The classic Greeks lived in a different world of nature and religious thought, and they loved the beautiful. To appreciate this contrast between the



beauty of the Greek deities and the hideous looks of those of Hinduism, we need but compare those exquisite faces of Zeus, Apollo, Persephone, Arethusa, Demeter and others, as stamped upon their coinage, with the monstrosities of the Hindu pantheon.



Left: Superb head of Arethusa on coin of Syraeuse, (317-289 B.C.)

Right: Crude goddess on Indian coin (A.D. 375-414).

As Zeus was the chief god of the Greeks, in like manner Jupiter was the great god among the Romans and worshipped throughout the empire. Many Roman medallions and coins bear the effigies of Jupiter, as well as his august name and titles that designate his greatness, for the inscriptions recognize him as the mighty champion of their cause, the conqueror and liberator, as well as protector and preserver, and often suiting the action to the word, in grasping a handful of thunderbolts with which to defend his own and to send disaster by hurling them among his enemies, and hence his friends were safe under his keeping. Whilst victory was achieved under his lordly rule, he also bestowed peace upon them, for all this is so stated on the coins which also designate him as the governor of the world as well as the thunderer, and he delivered his own from storms, and in recognition of such an escape from imminent peril that threatened the life of the emperor Augustus, he had a notable denarius issued, stamped with a temple and Jupiter standing within the open portal bearing the inscription "IO JUPITER TONANS." Other coins bear his effigy with various attributes. The most remarkable inscriptions are those found upon certain gold and silver coins of Augustus, and in the abbreviated form is as follows: "The Senate and the Roman people have addressed vows to the best and greatest Jupiter for the preservation of the emperor Caesar, in acknowledgment of his having re-established the republic in a better, richer, happier, and more tranquil condition." Commodus on his coins also acknowledged Jupiter as the "sponsor or watcher over the security," and as "the defender of the health of the emperor."



Denarius of Augustus featuring Temple of Jupiter.

We must not lose sight of the important fact that the conception of the deity was not the same among those nations as that held by the Semitic people, especially by the Hebrew branch of it. The deity himself did not mean the same to the various class of worshippers. When the people in the Far East and their descendants in Europe called upon the supreme being, there was a vast difference in their ideas and thoughts respecting the character and personal relation of that being as compared with those held by the Hebrews respecting the attributes of Jehovah and his relation to man, and greater still since God revealed Himself through Christ are the conceptions as held by the Christian believer.

I would not seek in any way to detract from the loftiest conceptions of deity as held by the ancients referred to, but we certainly err in reading our modern thoughts and understanding of God as our heavenly Father into their word for deity, for we include now in that term many precious truths that were entirely foreign to their minds. Christ the Light of the World had not come to them, and men were seeking God "if haply they might feel after Him and find Him." But their knowledge of God was not that which came in the fulness of time, as the study of comparative religions shows.

When the Greeks and Romans looked at the face of Zeus or Jupiter upon the coin, they saw not that divine personality which the Christian perceives when he contemplates the name of God, or when he beholds that image of the cross which symbolizes God's boundless love. The Homeric Zeus, whilst occupying a supreme place among the gods of Olympus, on the highest peak of which he had his throne, is not without his physical and moral frailties, that seem quite human at times, whilst he lacks the supreme divine attributes of Jehovah, for Homer's conception of deity was very inferior to that which the Christian entertains in reference to the all-powerful, all-wise, all-loving and holy God who is no respecter of persons.

It is not strange that the Romans identified Jupiter, the lord of heaven, with Zeus as they became acquainted with the religions of the Greeks. But when the Greeks and Romans saw the image or read the name of their chief deity upon their coins, whether that of Zeus or Jupiter, it did not convey to them the same meaning and sacred attributes that we associate with the name of God. The name may be similar or even identical, but the concept of that name as a personal and all-loving God conveys a very different meaning to the Christian, and awakens thoughts, and hopes, and inspires with supreme motives for holiness of living and fellowship with God as the universal heavenly father, and with love for the universal brotherhood of man, such as the ancients never dreamed of, for we are living in a different world and our relations to God and man are very different.

To be continued.